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SERMON

IN

4476. CC. 111

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CONFUTATION

Of R. H. the AUTHOR

OF

The Guide in Controversies.

SHEWING

That his most plausible Arguments produced
against *Protestants*, do more effectually
conclude for *Judaism* against *Christianity*.

B Y

DANIEL WHITBY, D. D.

Chantor of the Church of Sarum.

*Religio nunquam magis periclitatur quam inter
Reverendissimos. Luther.*

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John vii. 47, 48, 49.

Are ye also deceived? have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law is accursed.

THE Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, by which his Doctrine was confirmed, were so exceeding many, and exceeding great, that they prevailed on those plain hearted people who beheld them to believe that he who wrought them was indeed the Christ. For many of the people believed on him, saying, *when Christ cometh will he do more miracles than these?* Verse 31. These apprehensions of the Vulgar did so Alarum the Chief-Priests, and Pharisees, who saw their Interest, Authority, and Credit with the people must decline, as fast as that of Christs prevailed, that they forthwith dispatcht their Officers to take him, and bring him to them, Verse 32. These Officers when they had heard the gracious words which

§. I.



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§. I.

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issued

A S E R M O N.

issued from the mouth of *Christ*, were themselves taken by him, they who were sent to bring *Christ* to the *Priests* and *Pharisees*, were themselves brought to *Christ*, and so these Converts neglect to do the Office of the *High-Priests* Serjeants. And being asked the reason why they had not brought *Christ*, they boldly answer, that they had heard such gracious and heavenly words proceeding from him *as never man before him spake*, and therefore could not think it fit to apprehend so excellent a person, as he was. The *Pharisees*, hearing this answer, do presently conclude their *Officers* must be deceived in these kind thoughts of *Christ*, and offer this, as they supposed, convincing Argument, to prove it, *viz.* that though the giddy multitude, who had no knowledge of the Law, and therefore no capacity to understand the mind of God contained in it, might be enclined to think that *Jesus* was indeed the *Christ*, yet since the *Rulers* of the *Church*, the *Sanhedrim*, seeing the *Doctors*, and Expounders of the Law, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* believed not on him, but did unanimously reject him as a vile *Impostor*, they must be certainly deceived, who apprehended otherwise concerning him, because they followed the verdict of the ignorant, and giddy multitude, in opposition to the better judgments, and the mature deliberations of their *Church Guides*, and learned *Clerks*.

Now amongst all the Arguments by which the *Emissaries* of the *Church* of *Rome* endeavour to beguile unstable souls, and beget in them a suspicion that they have been seduced from the *Church*, none is more plausible than this which by the *Pharisees* is here laid down. I therefore shall endeavour,

1. To

1. To propound the Argument which is here urged by the *Pharisees* to prove our *Jesus* could not be the true *Messiah*, in its full strength and vigor. And

2. To shew that what the *Papists* do produce to prove that *Protestants* must be deceived, is exactly parallel to what the *Pharisees* did, or might produce against our *Saviour*, and the same arguments might with equal reason have been urged by the unbelieving *Jews* against our *Lords Disciples*, and those who laid the first foundations of, and became early converts to the *Christian Faith*; As they are urged by the *Papists* against our departure from the *Church of Rome*.

Now the Argument contained in the Text is this, *viz.* You must be certainly deceived if you believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*; Because you do, by entertaining this persuasion, contradict the judgment of your *Church Guides* which God hath set over you. For they have frequently assembled for the determination of this grand debate, *Whether this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the Jews or not*, and they have constantly determined that he was not the *Christ*. And have unanimously concluded that he deserved to be punished as a vile *Impostor*, and that all who did confess that he was the *Christ*, should be *excommunicated*. In an assembly consisting of *Chief Priests*, and *Pharisees*, they positively declare that *Christ* could be no *Prophet* because he was a *Galilean*. This John vii. 52. all, say they, who search the Scriptures may Verse 41, 42. plainly see. Moreover they determine in my Text, that all who so esteemed him were them- Verse 47, 48, selves deceived, and that they lay exposed to this 49. delusion for want of knowledge in the Law. In the ninth Chapter of St. *John*, the *Pharisees* again Verse 16. declare

Συνεσις
John ix. 22.
xii. 42.

Disc. chap. 4.
S. 64, 65, 69.
70.

Mark iii. 22.
Συνεσις
Joh. xi. 47, 50,
53.

Luke xxii. 66.

Matth. xxvii.
63.

Act. iv. 6, 18.

Act. v. 40.

declare that *this man* could not be of God, because he did not keep the Sabbath. Moreover these Pharisees, and other Rulers of the Church, determined and agreed together, that *whosoever* did confess that *Jesus* was the Christ, should suffer excommunication. They therefore thought themselves infallibly certain, (if excommunication be as R. H. informs us, an evidence of a claim to be infallible) that Christ was not the true Messiah. Elsewhere the Scribes and Pharisees do positively conclude that Christ did only *Cast out Devils through Beelzebub*. After some days they again call a Council and there determine that it was fit that Christ should die. This the High-Priest declares, and all the Pharisees, and the Chief-Priests agree to execute. A full Assembly consisting of the High-Priests, and all the Chief-Priests, Presbyters, and Scribes, Christ being brought before their Council, do with one voice declare that he was worthy to die as a Blasphemer, and also that by their Law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. After his death the Chief-Priests, and the Pharisees, with one consent pronounce him a deceiver. When the Disciples began to witness that he was risen from the dead, the High-Priests, Rulers, Elders, Scribes, and all the kindred of the High-Priest assemble at Jerusalem, and strictly do command them not to speak at all, or teach in the name of Jesus. Soon after the High-Priest, the Sanhedrim, and all the Elders of Israel, being met in Council, repeat the same command, and chastise the Apostles for their disobedience to it. If therefore the decrees of many Councils, consisting of the Guides of the whole Jewish Church, may be esteemed sufficient to decide a Controversie, it must be certain that *Jesus Christ* was not the true Messiah promised

misled to the *Jews*, but a *Deceiver* and *Blasphemer*. Now as a *Romanist*, having produced five *Provincial*, and two *General Councils*, falsely so called, for that portentous *Doctrine of Transubstantiation*, saith, *If the Decrees of so many Synods, so often weighing the Adversaries reasons and evidences, was not sufficient for settling such a point, at least as to the obedience of future silence, and noncontradiction, and as to suffering the Church to enjoy her peace, what can hereafter be sufficient? Or can we ever hope that any Controversie shall be finally determined, or ended by any future Council, if this, (of the Messiah) is not by these forepast? Can there be any ground here to question the integrity, or lawful proceedings of so many Councils, all concurring in the same judgment (for a Corporal presence, saith the Romanist, that Christ was a Deceiver, saith the Jew?) Or could there be any new light in this point attainable in those times, by the private person, or Christian Convert which those (Guides of the Jewish Church, who condemned your Jesus) were not capable, or had no notice of.*

2. They who so often, and so unanimously condemned your *Saviour*, and his *Doctrine* (saith the *Jew*) were the *Church-Guides* by God appointed to teach the *Children of Israel* all the *Statutes* which the *Lord* had spoken to them by the hand of *Moses*, to teach *Jacob* his judgments, and *Israel* his *Law*, and by whose lips the knowledge of it was to be preserved. They were the men who are in *Scripture* styled the *Messengers*, or the *Ambassadors of the Lord of Hosts*; that is, the men appointed by him to declare his message to the people. They were the men Ordained to Minister before the *Lord* in every *Controversial matter*, men who were set for the judgment of the *Lord* and for *Controversies*.

Rational Account, Disc. i. Chap. 6. S. 594 P. 58.

Levit. x. 11.
Deut. xxxiii.
10. Mal. ii. 7.
Ibid.

Deut. xvii. 8,
12.
2 Chron. xix. 8.

Ezek. xlv. 24. *troverſie they ſhall ſtand in judgment, ſaith the Lord,*
 Deut. xxi. 5. *and by their word ſhall every Controverſie be tried.*
 Deut. xvii. 12.

Wherefore to act in oppoſition to the judgment of theſe *Guides*, muſt be to act preſumptuouſly, as God himſelf declares, to deſpiſe the verdict of Gods *Meſſengers*, and in a Controverſial matter of the higheſt moment, to reject the ſentence of thoſe men, who are by God Ordained to define it, and by whoſe words, according to his Ordinance, it muſt be tried.

3. As for the common people, who in this matter did oppoſe their private judgments to the Decrees of their *Church Guides*, not acquieſcing in their Conciliar determinations, that your *Jeſus* was not the true *Meſſiah*, they, ſaith the *Jew*, muſt act againſt that Rule which both the Law of *Moſes*, and the *Prophets* have preſcribed, for by that Law they are commanded under pain of death when any Controverſie ſhould ariſe among them *to go to the Priests and Levites, and to the Judge*

Deut. xvii. 8.
12.

Hag. ii. 11.
Mal. ii. 7.

then living, to enquire the ſentence of judgment from his mouth, and to do according to the ſentence which they ſhall ſhew them, and according to all that they inform them, not declining from it to the right hand, or the left. They by the *Prophets* are inſtructed to *ask the Priests concerning the Law*, and to *ſeek the knowledge of it from their mouths*. They therefore ſtood obliged to aſſent to the determinations of the *Sanhedrim*, and the Conciliar Decrees of *Priests and Levites, Scribes and Pharisees* confirmed by the *High-Priest*, and ſo they were obliged to believe that according to the true intent and meaning of the Law, your *Jeſus* could not be the true *Meſſiah*. And conſequently they muſt err who quitting the Decisions of the *Pharisees*, and other *Rulers* of the *Church*, embrace that Tenet of the ignorant and giddy multitude.

Thus

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S. III.

Thus the *Jew* pleads from Scripture, against our Blessed Lord. And if you do compare these pleas, and others of like nature, which might be offered from the Scriptures by the *Jew*, with what the *Romanists* do offer for the infallibility of any of their *Councils*, you will soon find that all their pleas for this infallibility from the *New Testament*, are paralleled, or rather over-ballanced with places of like nature in the *Old*, which do more strongly plead for the infallibility of the *High-Priest*, and *Rulers* of the *Jewish Church*. For,

1. Doth the *Romanist* plead *Christs* promise to be
for ever with his Church? Matth. xxviii.
20.

Ans. The *Jews* had equal reason to expect Gods presence among them, because he promised to dwell among the children of Israel, to meet them at the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and there speak with them, to Reign over them in Zion from henceforth and for ever. He chose Zion for his habitation, and said of it, this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, and of Jerusalem, that he would put his name for ever in that place, and that his eyes, and his heart should be there for ever. Exod. xxix.
42, 43, 44, 45.
Mic. iv. 7.
Psal. cxxxii,
13, 14.
2 Chron. vii.
16.

2. Do they add that *Christ* hath promised that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them? Matth. xviii.
20.

Ans. God also promised to the *Jews* that he would bless them out of Zion, and that wheresoever he did record his name, there would he come and bless his people, Psal. cxxxiv. 3.
Exod. xx. 24.

3. Do they alledg these sayings of our Lord to his Disciples, viz. He that beareth you beareth me. He who neglects to hear the Church shall be accounted as a Heathen and a Publican. Luke x. 16.
Matth. xviii.
17.

Ans. God also said that he who will not hearken to the Priest that stands to minister before the Deut. xvii. 12

Lord, even that man shall die for his presumption.

Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

4. Do they say that *Christs Apostles* commanded *Christians* to obey those that had the rule over them, and to follow their faith?

Ans. Our Jesus did command his hearers to

Matth. xxiii. 3:

do all that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* did say unto them, and that because of their Authority derived from *Moses*, and God himself commanded all his

Deut. xvii. 10.

people to do according to all that they should be informed of by the *Priests*. And

John xvi. 13.

5. Do they plead *Christs* promise made to his *Apostles* that he would send the *Spirit of Truth* to guide them into all Truth?

Chap. xiv. 26.

John xvi. 13.

Ans. Whereas this promise doth personally belong to the *Apostles*, and not to their *Successors* (for it is a promise to bring to their remembrance by his Spirit, what he before had said to them and to shew them things to come, to which Spirit of Prophecie the *Roman Doctors* do not now pretend.) I say whereas this promise did belong to the *Apostles* only, God stood obliged by Covenant to cause his holy Spirit to remain among the *Rulers* of the *Jewish Church*. For thus he speaks, according to the word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of *Ægypt*, so my Spirit remains among you. Moreover God promised to

John xiv. 26.

John xvi. 13.

Hag. ii. 5.

Numb. xi. 17.

the *Sanhedrim* that he would put the spirit of *Moses* upon them, and in compliance with that promise he came down in a Cloud, and took the spirit which was upon *Moses*, and gave it to the seventy *Elders*, so that they *Prophefied* and did not cease. Or,

1 Tim. iii. 15.

6. Do they argue for their infallibility, because the *Church* is stiled by *St. Paul*, the pillar, and the ground of truth, by reason of that truth which is preserved by her *Governours*?

Ans.

Ans. God also hath declared touching his Priests, that *the law of truth was in their mouth*, Mal. ii. 6. and of Jerusalem that *she should be called the City of truth*. Zech. viii. 3. And if the Church of Judah hath since failed, so also hath the Church of Ephesus, of which alone St. Paul affirmeth that it was the pillar, and the ground of truth.

7. Do they conclude that the Church-Guides must be infallible, because God hath placed in the Church some Apostles, some Prophets, some Pastors and some Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine? Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Ans. Were not the Jewish Priests placed also for this end, for the work of their Ministry, the perfecting of their Saints, the edifying of their Flocks? Were not their lips to preserve that knowledge which should restrain the people from their errors? Were not they appointed to heal that which was sick and bring again that which was strayed? Or, Ezek. xxxiv.

Lastly, Do they triumph in that promise of our Lord, that the Gates of Hell should not prevail against the Church? Matth. xvi. 18.

Ans. God also promised that his Covenant made with his Levites, Priests and Ministers, should be as certain and perpetual, as that of day and night. So that I need not add, that by this Phrase, Christ only promiseth that pious Christians shall not for ever be detained under the power of the grave, which I have elsewhere shewed, to be the natural, and only import of these words, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church. Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. Essay. Chap. 3.

Moreover the plain meaning of the foregoing words, viz. *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church*, is, as ^a *Tertullian* well informs us, only this: Thou who hast first of all my Disciples acknowledged me to be the *Christ*, thou shalt first preach this Doctrine to the World, and, by so doing, lay the first foundations of a *Christian Church*. Which he accordingly performed, first laying the foundation of a ^b *Church* among the *Jews* by the conversion of three thousand souls, And after laying the foundation of a *Church* amongst the *Gentiles*, by the conversion of *Cornelius*, and his friends, *Christ* having, to fulfil his promise, ^c *made choice of him among the rest of the Apostles, that the Gentiles by his mouth should bear the word of the Gospel, and believe*. Now to pretend to be *St. Peters Successor* in this matter, is in effect to say, that the foundations of a *Christian Church* are not yet laid.

^a *Si quia dixerit Petro Dominus, Super hanc petram edificabo Ecclesiam meam, idcirco præsumis & ad te derivasse solvendi & ligandi potestatem, qualis es evertens & commutans manifestum domini intentionem personaliter (N.B.) hoc Petro conferentem, sic enim & exitus docet, in ipso Ecclesia exstructa est, id est, per ipsum.---ipse primus in Christi Baptismo referavit aditum celestis Regni. De Pudicitia cap. 21. p. 574. B. ^b Acts 2. 41. ^c Acts 15. 7.*

If therefore *Roman Catholicks* conclude from these ambiguous and obscure places for the infallibility of *Councils*, or of the *major part* of the *Church guides* concurring with the *Pope* in any Sentence or Decree, although these places do not speak one syllable of any *Pope*, or *major part* of the *Church-Guides*, and much less of the *Romish Prelats*, and less of their *infallible assistance*, what *Ovations* and *Triumphs* would they have made, had it been said expressly of their *Cardinals* and *Councils*, as it is said of *Jewish Priests*, that they were set for judgment and for Controversie: had God fixed his glorious presence at *Rome*, as he did at *Jerusalem*?

and

and settled there a seat of Judgment, and a continual Court of highest judicature, as was that *Sanhedrim* which in *Jerusalem* was settled? had he dwelt in *St. Peters* as he dwelt in the *Temple*? had he left with them, as he did with the *Jewish Priests*, a standing Oracle, a *Urim* and a *Thummim* to consult with on all occasions? so that this plea being much stronger for the infallibility of the *Superiors* of the *Jewish Church*, than for the infallibility of the whole *Western Church*, or any of its *Councils*, the *Roman Doctors* must acknowledge either that they fallaciously urge it against *Protestants*, or must confess that it stands also good against the *Christian*, and is a confirmation of all those traditions which were condemned by our *Saviour*, and a sufficient plea for all those errors and corruptions, which, as the *Prophets* do complain, were generally taught and practised by the *Church-Guides*, in the declining Ages of the *Jewish Church*. For if these Arguments be good now, they were so then, and if they were good then, for ought that I can see, the *High Priest*, and the major part of the *Church Rulers* of the *Jews* were always in the right, and *Christ* and his *Apostles*, with the *Holy Prophets*, must be in the wrong;

V. *Stillingsf.*
Sermon upon
Acts 24. 14.
P. 39.

Moreover had we no evidence from *Scripture*, may the *Jew* say in prosecution of this Argument, reason seems very strongly to conclude for this submission of the common people, and some few *Priests* to the concurring judgments of their *Church-Guides*, and of the major part of *Jews*, who joyned with them in condemnation of your *Jesus*, as a *Blasphemer* and false *Prophet*, and of his followers as *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*, or men who worshipped *God* after that way which by the

S. IV.

Acts 24. 14.
ibid. v. 5.

the *Jews* was called *Heresie*, and were *Ring-leaders* of a *Sect*. For still to argue after the manner of the *Romish Doctors*.

1. Is it not reasonable to conceive that they who were Gods *Ministers* appointed for this very thing to judg in controversial matters, and to make tryal of such as did pretend to *Prophesie*, as was the *Jewish Sanhedrim*: I say, is it not reasonable to conceive that the assistance of the Holy Spirit should be vouchsafed to these *Rulers* of the *Church*, and *Doctors* of the Law, rather than to those common people who bore no such relation to God, had no commission from him to direct others in the meaning of his word, but had so many, and such expresse injunctions to seek it at the mouth of their *Church-Guides*? Can we imagin that these *Pharisees* and *Rulers* should be the men ordained by God for Controversies, and by whose words they must be tried; and yet should be such blind and stupid *Guides*, as by your *Jesus* they were said to be, that *he who was led by them must fall into the ditch*?

Vid. *Answ. in*
Numb. xi. 16,
17.

Moreover were no assistance from above to be expected in this case, is it not reasonable to think that these great *Doctors* of the Law, those numerous *Priests* who made it their whole business to study, and search out the meaning of the Law of *Moses*, those Members of the *Sanhedrim*, who were still chosen out of the most Learned *Persons*, and the most eminent for wisdom, I say, may we not reasonably conceive such Persons to be fitter and more able *Judges* of the sense and meaning of that Law, or of the truth of any miracles pretended to be wrought by *Christ*, or his *Apostles*, than was that rude and giddy Multitude which had no knowledg of the Law? *They therefore considering*

considering their Superiors study and Learning in such things Divine, and also their own ignorance; they considering both the special ordination, and commission of their Superiors from God to teach them in necessary truths, and his charge laid upon them to obey their Ecclesiastical Superiors, ought to depend upon, and adhere to their directions so much the more in any point of faith, by how much it is esteemed more necessary, as wherein there is a much greater hazard if they should err.

R. H. discourse
Chap. 13. p. 13.

3. All that your Gospel doth suggest, or reason may pretend for the exemption of the first Jewish Converts from obedience to these decrees of their Superiors in the Jewish Church, may, saith the Jew, be fully answered from the plain Principles, and almost in the words of Roman Catholicks. For to proceed in the expressions of R. H. the Guide in Controversies, with very little variation of them.

1. Will you affirm that all the Priests and Rulers, Scribes and Pharisees, and the whole Sanhedrim acted against their faith and conscience, in these determinations by which your Jesus was condemned as an Impostor?

S. V.

Ans. R. H. will tell you there is a moral certainty that so many such persons cannot conspire in such a matter, viz. a necessary to Salvation, to falsifie the truth against their own belief and conscience, to their Subjects and Posterity, with an Anathema to all dissenters, or an excommunication of all who preached, and believed that Christ was the Messiah promised to the Jews, and was already risen from the dead, when their own consciences could tell them that these things were true. If any can be so uncharitable as to credit of them so great a wickedness, that the Supream Councils of the (Jewish) Church should

Discourse 1.
Ch. 3. §. 37,
38. p. 26.

Ibid. p. 25.

should with design decree an error contrary to their faith, (or knowledg) in this necessary matter, and then enjoin all their Subjects to believe it under Anathema, he must believe that they most certainly do devote themselves to eternal perdition. And therefore, if not out of Charity, or reverence to such sacred persons, yet from the irrationality of such a defence, it is much better to pass over this objection.

2. Will you say that these *Superiors* were only to be appealed to in doubtful matters, and that this thing, whether the *Scriptures* declared your *Jesus* to be the true *Messiah*, was not doubtful?

Disc. Chap. 3. S. 44. p. 29. *Ans.* R. H. informs you that a right judgment cannot but account all those places doubtful, in the sense whereof either the *Antient* or present major part of *Christianity* are of a contrary judgment from himself. That must be therefore doubtful, according to the ground and reason of this *Rule*, which you presume not to be doubtful, since it was that in which the major part of the then present *Jewish Church* was of a contrary judgment from the *Christian Convert*.

3. Will you plead in favour of the *vulgar*, that they were bound to hearken to these *Jewish Guides* no longer than they followed the *Rule of Scripture*?

Ibid. p. 28.

Ans. Be it so, But saith R. H. Who is appointed judge of these *supreme Judges*, when they transgress against this *Rule*? their *Subjects*? who are from them to learn the sense of the *Rule* where difficult, and disputed, and who are bidden to follow their faith? The right exercise of *Judgment* will not judge so. For if the *vulgar* may pass this judgment of the *Decrees* of many *Councils*, and the concurring judgment of their *Superiors* and *Church Guides*, I hope the matter must be evident even to the

the vulgar sort that notwithstanding the contrary judgment of Chief Priests and Rulers, Scribes, Pharisees and Elders, and almost all the Jewish Nation, that sense of Scripture must be false, which their Ecclesiastical Guides alledged, to prove that Jesus was not the true Messiah, and that according to their Law he was to die, and that sense of the Scripture must be true which by the Apostles, and their few Converts, was alledged to prove that Jesus was the Messiah promised to the Jew. Now how vainly, saith R.H. doth any one pretend, or promise himself a certainty of any thing wherein so many Councils, and a much major part of the Church, having all the same means of certainty as he, judgeth contrary? where it seems the Scripture may be so doubtful that the sense of the (then) Catholick Church, or its greatest Councils, they say, can be to them no certain or infallible interpreter of it, where the judgment or common Reason of these Councils thinks it self so certain of the contrary, as to Anathematise dissenters, or cast them out of the Church. On what grounds here these private Persons, or new erected Churches could assure themselves of their own sense of Scripture to be true, they having left that of the Churches Councils, and of a major part of (Jews) who also judged their sense false, I understand not. Surely they will not say, they have this certainty from the Scripture, because the true sense thereof is the thing so mainly questioned, and the certainty or infallibility of the traditive sense of the (Jewish) Church they renounced, and then, which only is left, their own judgment, or their own common reason, when that of their greatest Councils, or major part of their Church-Guides, differs from it, one would think should be a more fallible ground to them, than the judgment or common reason of the Church.

For

Ibid. p. 143.

Rational account. disc. 3.
Chap. 4. S. 42.
p. 179.

Ibid. disc. 2. For a man to presume himself certain in a matter of
 Chap. 2. §. 15. faith, or in his own sense of Scripture, (though the
 P. 95. literal expression be never so clear,) where so many

✓ Rational ac-
 count disc. 2.
 Chap. 5. §. 42.
 P. 141.

Learned and his Superiours, (comparing other
 Texts, &c.) are of a contrary judgment, this, saith
 R. H. is the same as if in a matter of sence, a dim
 sighted Person should profess himself certain that an
 object is white, when a multitude of others, the most
 clear sighted that can be found, having all the same
 means of a right sensation as he hath, pronounce it
 black, or of another colour. Moreover if these Scri-
 ptures, or reasons be so clear even to the ignorant
 and unlearned Jew, must they not be as clear to
 their Church-Guides, and may not then their
 judgments more securely be rely'd upon, at least
 for any thing which is presumed to be clear? For
 Disc. Chap. 3. if Scriptures be maintained so clear in necessities,
 §. 37. P. 24. that every one using a right endeavour cannot mistake
 in them, then shall the Church Governours much ra-
 ther, by reason of this clearness, obvious to every Ru-
 stick, not err in them; and so shall the people, the
 more the Rule of faith is proved to be clear, the more
 securely rely on, and be referred in them to their di-
 rection.

4. If you pretend a more sincere endeavour in
 those few converts to find out the sense of Scrip-
 ture, or search out the truth in these matters,
 which, in the case of the *Bereans*, your Scripture
 seemeth to assert.

Disc. Chap. 1.
 P. 4, 5.

Ans^r. I Answer still with the same Author,
 that since all parties do pretend sincere endeavour in the
 right understanding of the Scriptures, and after it do
 differ so much in their sense of it, it follows that such
 sincere endeavours being indifferently allowed to all par-
 ties, the sense of Scripture, (and the verdict of
 true reason) ought to be pronounced clear, if on any,
 on

on that side as the major part doth apprehend it ;
 (which certainly was not the Primitive Converts,
 but the unbelieving Jews, and their Ecclesiastical
 Superiors.) For surely we have reason to presume Ibid. p. 24.
 that the Chief Guides of the Church, in their consults
 concerning a point necessary to Salvation delivered in
 Scripture, (as that of the Messiah was) use at least
 so much endeavour as a plain Rustick doth to under-
 stand the meaning of it. And whatsoever other thing
 is supposed necessary besides sincere endeavour, or is
 understood to be included in it, (as freedom from pas-
 sion, and secular Interest, or also a freely professing the
 truths which their sincere endeavour discovers to
 them,) none can rationally imagin but that these su-
 pream Church Governours should be as much, or more
 disengaged herein, than private men. And that pas- Ibid. p. 145.
 sion and interest blind private men, or our selves,
 sooner than General Councils, or a major part of the
 Church.

See therefore here the wisdom of the unbelie-
 ving Jews, who to preserve themselves from erring,
 in this matter, made use of the securest way that
 reason could imagine, saith R. H. or that Christians
 are prescribed, whilst for the sense of the Scriptures Rat. Account
 that were controverted in this point of the Messiah, Disc. 1. Chap.
 they chose not to rely on their own judgments, but on 7. S. 77. P. 74.
 that of the Supremest Guides of the Church, and
 Judges of Divine Truth that were afforded them on
 earth, and so if they erred, yet took the wisest course
 to have missed erring that Religion, or Reason could
 dictate. To which Guides also the subjects of this
 former Communion all believed submission of their
 private judgments to be due, and to be commanded,
 from whence also it follows that till they are convinced
 of error in this point, viz. that no submission was
 due, to the Decrees of all these Councils, and the
 concurring

concurring judgment of those *Spiritual Guides* by whom your *Jesus* was condemned, *they are not capable of being convinced in any other matter,*

If lastly, you affirm that the common people had conviction, and demonstration from the *Miracles* of *Christ* of the falshood of the Decrees, and the Interpretations of their *Church Guides* in this matter, and of the truth of that *Christianity* which they embraced in opposition to those said Decrees.

Ans. This I confess is a great truth, but then the *Roman Doctors* cannot plead it, without rejecting most of their professed Tenets, and their strongest pleas for absolute submission to the *Major* part of their *Church Guides*. For,

Rat. Account
Disc. I. Chap.
6. §. 62. p. 63.

1. Admit our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles* wrought true *Miracles*, how did the *vulgar* perceive them so to be but by their senses? and how did they infer from them the truth of *Christianity*, but by their private Reasons? Now *the evidence of sense and reason must be both neglected*, saith the *Romanist*, *when a Divine Revelation declares any thing contrary to them*, This, and this only, being their defence of *Transubstantiation* against the common sense and reason of mankind. Now of the certainty of a Divine Revelation, or the true sense of *Scripture*, they make the judgment of the *Major* part of their *Church Guides* to be sufficient evidences, and so there was sufficient evidence, according to this *Rule*, that all the *Miracles* which *Christ*, and his *Apostles* seemed to work, were done in opposition to *Divine Revelation*, or the true sense of *Scripture*.

2. Certain it is that the *Rulers* of the *Jews*, and the prevailing part of the whole *Nation*, differed from the converted *Christians* in their apprehensions of these *Miracles*, and judged them all *Diabolical*

bolical Impostures, or trials of their Faith, &c. Now this seems necessary to be granted, saith R. H. that in what kind of knowledg soever it be, (whether of our sense or reason, in what ever Art or Science) one can never rightly assure himself concerning his own knowledg, that he is certain of any thing for a truth, which all, or most others of the same, or better abilities for their cognoscitive faculties, in all the same external means, or grounds of the knowledg thereof, do pronounce an error. So that where all, or most differ from me, it seems a strange pride not to imagine this defect in my self, rather than them, especially when as all the grounds of my science are communicated to them, and when as for my own mistakes, I cannot know exactly the extent of supernatural delusions. According therefore to this Rule, it was strange pride in the first Converts to Christianity among the Jews, to judg the Miracles of Christ, or his Apostles true, when most of their own Nation, as well as Heathens, differed from them in that apprehension, and spake so freely every where against the Sect of Christians.

3. The truth of the pretences of our Lord, and his Apostles, depended on two things, viz. the fulfilling of Prophecies, and the truth of his Miracles. Now according to the Roman Principles no man could be certain of the truth of either of these without the Authority of the then present Church. For the fulfilling of Prophecies depended on the sense of many obscure places of Scripture, of which, say they, the Major part of the Church-Guides must judg. And for Miracles, they tell us that there is no certain way of judging true, from false, but by the Authority of the Church. Now if these things be so, what ground could the first Jewish Converts have to believe Christ was the true Messiah,

Rat. Account
Disc. 4. Conf. 2.
P. 384.

Stillirg. ibid.
P. 42.

or a worker of true Miracles, when in believing both these things, they must oppose the Authority of the then present Church.

4. All that hath been discoursed in answer to the former pleas, serves also against this. For who shall be judg whether these *Miracles* were true, and were sufficient to confirm the *Christian Faith*? those *Persons* whose Office it was to judg both of true *Prophets*, and true *Miracles*, or those who had no power or commission so to do? Was not the *Jewish Sanhedrim* and other *Rulers* of that *Church* more able *Judges* of the Truth, and the validity of any *Miracles* pretended to be wrought by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, than was that *Multitude* which, as experience teacheth, may be imposed upon with ease? Were not those *Guides* who were appointed to be *Judges* in all other matters, the proper *Judges* of this Controversie? Have we not reason to believe their judgment was as free from interest and passion, and their endeavors to search out the truth of these relations as sincere, as was the judgment or endeavours of the *Laitie*? When therefore these *Church-Guides* did notwithstanding those pretended *Miracles* of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, conclude unanimously that *Christ* was a *Deceiver*, was it not absurd to say that what they so universally determined, might be discerned by any private judgment to be the clearest falshood? that *vulgar* persons had demonstration in this matter against the judgment of the whole body of their *Guides*, and that their common reason was able to discern that to be manifestly true, which the same common reason of their *Superiors*, judg'd to be manifestly false?

Thus

Thus have we seen that *Scripture* and Reason do more countenance the *Jew* pleading against our Lord, and the first *Christian* Converts, than they do countenance the *Papist* pleading against *Protestants*. In the last place the *Jew* may argue from Tradition thus, viz.

These *Spiritual Guides* in making this determination and passing of this judgment concerning *Jesus* were guided by that *Rule*, which by the greatest part of *Christians*, I mean the *Roman Catholics*, is highly magnified, and equaled with the *Holy Scriptures*, viz. Tradition, acknowledged by the *present Church* for such. And so your *Jesus* must also upon this account be deemed an *Impostor*, or the pretences and pleadings of the *Romanist* against the *Protestant*, from the Tradition of the *Church*, must be acknowledged to be vain. For,

1. It is most certain that the *Jews* had a Tradition generally received amongst them that their *Messiah* at his coming should restore the Kingdom to *Israel*. That he should subdue the *Nations* under them, and should erect a Temporal Dominion in the *Jewish* Nation over all their Enemies. Even the Disciples of our Lord did constantly believe this Article, till by the *Holy Ghosts* descent upon them, they were better informed. Witness their contests who should be greatest in that Kingdom, Matth. xviii. 1. and the desire of the Sons of *Zebedee* to sit one at his right hand, another at his left hand in it. Matth. xx. 21. This was our Faith, saith *Cleopas*, we trusted that this *Jesus* should have Redeemed our *Israel*. Luke xxiv. 21. And when they were assembled, after the Resurrection, their first enquiry is this, Lord wilt thou now restore the Kingdom to *Israel*. Act. i. 6. It is therefore certain that this was the received Tradition of the whole *Jewish Church*, grounded as they supposed,

αὐτοὶ ἡμᾶς αἱ upon the *Scriptures* which did necessitate them to
 γραφαὶ ἐνδοξ- expect a glorious *Messiah*, not such a one, saith Try-
 ον καὶ μέγαν ἀ- pho, as your mean and despised *Jesus* was.

ναυόμεν ἀγα-
 καὶ ζῶσιν. Dial.
 p. 249. B.

Mal. iv. 5.

Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ μὴ δεῖ
 Ἡλίου ἐληλυ-
 θέναι καὶ δεῖ τοῦ
 τοῦ ὑποταίνου-
 μεν εἶδ. Dial.
 p. 268. A.

Ὅτι Ἡλίου δεῖ
 ἔλθειν πρῶτον.
 Mark ix. 11.

2. It was also a Tradition which generally ob-
 tained amongst the *Jews*, that their *Elias*, who
 was called the *Thisbite*, was to appear again in
 person before the advent of the true *Messiah*, so
 was that place of *Malachi* Translated by the *Se-*
venty three hundred and eighty years before our
Saviours coming. Behold I send unto you *Elias*
 τὸν Θεσβίτῳ before the great and glorious day of
 the Lord come. All we expect, saith Trypho, that
 Christ should be anointed by *Elias*, who is for to come,
 and because this *Elias* is not come we think your *Jesus*
 cannot be the Christ. Accordingly the *Scribes*, or
 the *Expounders* of the Law, did with one voice
 declare it necessary that *Elias* should first come.

3. It was the general Tradition of the *Jews*
 that the Law of *Moses* should be perpetually
 obliging to them; and that it was to be observed
 even in the days of the *Messiah*. On this presump-
 tion certainly it was that Christs *Disciples*, after
 his Resurrection, were strict observers of the Law
 of *Moses* for a considerable time; and so were al-
 so many thousands of the *Jewish Converts*. *St. Pe-*
ter was so nice in observation of the *Jewish* cu-
 stoms that till he was informed better by a vision,
 he thought such meat was utterly unlawful as was
 forbidden by the Law, so that when in that vision
 he was bid to *slay and eat*, he presently cries out,
 as a man tempted to an unlawful act, Not so Lord,
 for I have never eaten any thing that is unclean.
St. James gives an account to *Paul* of the great
 Zeal that all the *Jewish Converts* had to the Law
 of *Moses* in these words, Thou seest Brother how
 many thousand of *Jews* there are which believe, and
 they

Act. x. 14.

Act. xxi. 20.

they are all zealous of the Law. He farther tells him how highly they were all offended with him, because they were informed he had taught that they were not obliged to yield obedience to the Constitutions and Customs of the Jewish Law; and lastly doth exhort him to do what might be proper to cause these Zealots to believe that he also walked orderly, and kept the Law. ^a St. Jerom, and ^b Sulpicius inform us that fourteen immediate succeeding Bishops, with their flocks, were all observers of the Law of Moses. And by the unbelieving Jews nothing was more abhorred than the thoughts of changing their Mosaiick Customs. For upon this account St. Stephen was accused of Blasphemy against Moses, and the Law, because he said that the Messiah should change the customs which Moses had delivered to them. This accusation before the Scribes, the Elders and High-Priest, was deemed sufficient to prove him guilty of that capital offence of Blasphemy. On this account they bring St. Paul before the judgment seat of Gallio, because, say they, he did persuade men to worship God *κατὰ τὸν νόμον*, against, or otherwise than was commanded by the Law of Moses. And this opinion they grounded chiefly upon those places which seem to speak of the perpetual duration of those Statutes, and say they shall be ordinances to them for ever, and consequently seem to infer a Declaration from the mouth of God, that they should not be altered.

Moreover it is certain that, as the Protestants condemn as sinful and pernicious, many Traditions and Customs of the Roman Church, so did that Jesus whom Christians honour as the true Messiah, as frequently inveigh against, and solemnly condemn many Traditions which then

Verse 21.

Verse 24.

^a Chron. 2.^b Lib. 2. c. 45.

Act. vi. 11, 14.

Act. xviii. 13.

Deut. xxix. 29.

Levit. iii. 11.

Exod. xii. 17.

were generally received, and practised in the Jewish Church, as vain and sinful customs, and such as tended to make void the Scriptures, and render the whole Jewish worship vain. He therefore seemeth to have been as great an enemy to Ecclesiastical Traditions, though they were generally owned by the then present Church, as such as Protestants can be esteemed.

Lastly, Certain it is that the Superiours, and Church Rulers, or at the least the Major, and prevailing part of the Church Rulers, did then as firmly, and unquestionably believe that those Traditions which were condemned by your Jesus, and which so evidently proved, if true, he was not the Messiah promised to the Jew, were both agreeable to the word of God Expounded by their Church Tradition, and were delivered to them by Moses and the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and were continually practised by their Forefathers, as doth the Roman Church believe that her Traditions were taught, and practised by Christ or his Apostles, and by their Successors throughout all Ages of the Church. Hence are they often

Παρεδόται ὑπὸ

πρεσβυτέρων.

Matth. xv. 2.

Αἱ περὶ ταύτας

παραδόσεις.

Gal. i. 14.

Ἀποστασίαν δι-

δοικεὶς ὑπὸ

Μωσέως, λέγων

μή, τοῖς ἔδοται

παιπαταίην.

Act. xxi. 21.

Act. xxviii. 17.

styled by them the Traditions of the Antients, or the Traditions received by succession from their Fathers.

And in their later writers they are always held to be derived from God by Moses together with the written Law, and as an explication of it.

Hence, like good Roman Catholicks, they were

more exceedingly zealous for the Traditions of their

Fathers, than for the Law it self. They accuse

all who walked not according to these customs of

their Fathers, as persons who forsook the Law of

Moses. And to do any thing against these customs

of their Fathers was reputed Criminal: This be-

ing so,

I ask why the tradition of the *major* part of the *Church Catholick*, or *Christians* in any Age whatsoever, and their concurring judgment that what she doth at present teach, and practise, she received from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, should be esteemed sufficient to render all those persons guilty of *Heresie* and *Schism*, who do not yield assent to what they teach, or a compliance with their practices as *Roman Catholicks* assert, and yet that the general tradition of the then present *Jewish Church*, even including the *Disciples* of *Christ*, should not conclude them *Schismatics* and *Heretics*, who being Members of that Church, would not assent unto what they so generally taught, or comply with that which they practised as delivered to them by *Moses*, and the *Patriarchs*, and *Prophets*.

But to apply these things, if it be possible, yet more particularly unto the pleadings of the *Roman Church*, and to shew the weakness and the pernicious results of their most specious pretences. I add,

S. VII.

1. That notwithstanding it was the duty of the *Priests* and *Rulers* of the *Jewish Church* both to preserve and teach unto the people the knowledge of the *Law*, yet did the *major* part of these *Church-Guides*, both oft and dangerously swerve from this their duty. For they did teach and practise, and direct the people into those ways which were destructive to the eternal welfare of their Souls, God by his *Prophets* doth complain without exception of them, *that they erred in vision, and stumbled in judgment, that the teachers of his people made lies their refuge, and under falsehood hid themselves, saying, the overflowing scourge shall not come to us: that their Interpreters had transgress'd against him, that his watchmen were blind, they were all ignorant, all dumb dogs that could not bark, sleeping, ly-* *Esa. xxviii. 7. Ibid. v. 15. Isa. xlii. 27. Isa. lvi. 10, 11.*

Jer. ii. 8.

Jer. v. 31.

Jer. vi. 13, 14.

Jer. viii. 9.

Jer. xxiii. 1, 2.

Ibid. v. 11.

Ezek. xxii. 26.

Ezek. xxxiv.

1, 6.

Hof. iv. 6.

Zeph. iii. 4.

Mal. ii. 8.

Isa. iiii. 12.

Chap. ix. 16.

Jer. i. 6.

Matt. xxiii.

ing down, loving to slumber; that they were greedy dogs that could never have enough. Shepherds that could not understand, that the Priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handled the Law knew him not, that the Pastors also transgressed against him, and the Prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that did not profit. That his Prophets prophesied falsely, and the Priests bare rule by their means. That from the Prophet to the Priest every one dealt falsely. That they heard also the hurt of the Daughter of his people slightly, saying, peace, peace, when there was no peace. That his wise men had rejected the word of the Lord. And that the Pastors whose business it was to feed his sheep, destroy'd, and scattered, and drove them away, and did not visit them. That both Priests and Prophets were profane. That they had violated his Law, and had profaned his holy things, putting no difference betwixt the Holy and profane, the clean and the unclean, and hid their eyes from his Sabbaths. That the Shepherds of Israel fed themselves, but did not feed the flock, the diseased did they not strengthen, neither did they heal that which was sick, nor bring again that which was driven away, nor seek that which was lost, but with force and cruelty they Ruled, so that the sheep were scattered because there was no Shepherd. That they rejected knowledg, so that Gods people were destroyed for lack of it. That her Prophets were light and treacherous persons, her Priests had polluted the Sanctuary, they had done violence to the Law. That they had forgotten the Law of their God, they departed out of the way, they caused many to stumble at the Law, they corrupted the Covenant of Levi.

Moreover of these Guides it is expressly said, That they which led his people caused them to err, and destroyed the way of their paths. That the Leaders of the people caused them to err, and they that were led

of

of them were destroyed, and that their *Shepherds* caused them to go astray. Our Lord declares, that they were fools, blind *Guides*, full of Hypocrisie, and of iniquity, that they had taken away the key of knowledge, Luke xi. 52. and had shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, Matt. xxiii. 13. not going in themselves, nor suffering them that were entering to go in. That they made many false decisions in matters of so great importance as to make void the Law of God, and render his whole worship Matt. xv. 6, 9. vain. That they transgressed the commandment of God by their Traditions. That notwithstanding their instructions the people were as *sheep without a* Matt. ix. 36. *Shepherd*, or only had such *Guides* as would most Matt. xv. 14. certainly, if they submitted to their guidance, lead them to the pit. Hence therefore I infer,

1. That even those *Spiritual Guides* who are by Gods appointment constituted to instruct his people, and to feed his flock (for such our Lord acknowledged the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, and *Rulers* of the *Jewish Church* to be) may scatter, and destroy that flock. And they who are set for the judgment of the Lord, and for controversies, may violate, corrupt, pervert that Law they should interpret, they may be partial in it, they may depart out of the way, they may make the Commandments of God of none effect, and his whole worship vain by their traditions, they may cause their sheep to err, stumble, and go astray, and that so dangerously that they who are led by them shall be destroyed with them, and find no entrance into bliss. And hence, I hope, I may assume the boldness to conclude against the *Infallibility* of our *Spiritual Governours*, or the concurring judgments of the *major* part of them: which is sufficient to root up even the foundations of the *Romish Babel*.

2. Hence

2. Hence I infer that notwithstanding all the formentioned Scriptures, which say it was the duty of the people to ask of their *Spiritual Guides* the meaning of the Law; and seek the knowledge of it at their mouths, and to enquire after their judgments in all those Controversies they were not able to resolve. I say, hence I infer, that notwithstanding this, the people were not absolutely obliged to rest in the decision of the *major* part of these *Church Guides*, or bound to practise all that they approved, for then an obligation must be laid upon them, not only to err in judgment with them, to countenance false *Prophets*, and to speak peace to themselves when there is no peace, but also to violate the Law, and to comply with their false glosses, and corrupt interpretations of it; nay, which is more unreasonable, they must be then obliged to be destroyed, to fall into the pit, and to exclude themselves from the enjoyment of *Christ's Kingdom*. Whereas it is a contradiction to say that God obligeth any Person to transgress his Law, and it is little less than *Blasphemy* to say he doth require them to destroy themselves, to fall into the pit, or to deprive themselves of the enjoyment of his Kingdom. Hence therefore I infer this Corollary:

That neither are all Christian people, Churches, or Nations absolutely bound to rest in the decisions of the major part of Christian Bishops, or to practise all that they approve and impose. Which proposition overthroweth that absolute and blind obedience to their *Church Guides*, or *Councils* which *Romanists* so stily plead for.

3. Hence it is also evident that *private persons* or that the *minor* part of the whole *Church* may have sufficient ground, either from reason, or clear

Scripture

Scripture, for their refusal of assent, and of submission to the Authority and definitions of the major part of their Church Guides; for the Jews were bound to believe Christ to be the true Messiah, although the High Priest, and the Elders had pronounced him a deceiver, and a Malefactor. They were obliged to believe his Miracles were wrought, not by Belzebub, but the Spirit of God; that Christ's Kings was not of this world, that John Baptist was that Elias which was for to come, and that to eat with hands unwashed, to heal the sick, to pluck some ears of Corn upon the Sabbath day, were not unlawful actions, although the major part of their Church Guides taught, and believed the contrary. Matt. xv. 5. They were obliged not to void that Law of nature which required Children to relieve their own distressed Parents, and therefore stood obliged not to comply with those traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, which made the word of God of none effect, and would not suffer them to yield obedience to it. And seeing they had many traditions and decrees of the like nature, which obtained amongst them, and only were rejected by the Sadducees, and the Disciples of our Lord; in none of these could they comply with their Church Guides without the violation of that Law of God, which sure they had sufficient ground and reason to observe. In a word, in all those cases in which they were not bound to rest in the decisions of the major part of their Church Guides, or practise what they did approve, that is in all the cases mentioned in the former head, they must have had sufficient ground, either from Scripture, or from Reason, for their refusal of submission to them. Now these three inferences do fully justify the Reformation of the Church of England.

Παράμυα τοι-
αύτα πολλά.
Mark vii. 8.

From

§. VIII.

R. H. Rational
account, disc.
3. Chap. 5.
§. 63. P. 203.

4. From what hath been discoursed we may see the weakness of those pleas the *Roman Doctors* make in their own defence, and of the Arguments they use to shew that 'tis impossible they should be guilty of those corruptions in Doctrine, or in manners which we charge them with. For their most specious pretences are to this effect, that we confels the *Church of Rome* was once both true, and *Orthodox*, shew then, say they, how we did cease to be so, whether by *Schism* or *Heresie*? With *Schism* you cannot justly charge us, for that can never be of a much major, and more dignified part, in respect of a less, and inferior, subject to it; because this main body in any division is rightly taken for the whole, from which a separation is *Schism*, and to which every Member ought to adhere, as to the body, and head here upon earth to which it belongs; we therefore being the much major, and more dignified part of the *Church*, cannot be *Schismatics* in reference to *Protestants* who are, and were at their departure, a less and an inferior body to us. If *Heresie* be the crime charged upon us, by what *Church* were we condemned? what body of men, before you, found fault with those corruptions which you, pretend to reform? for sure it was not possible for so many errors and corruptions to come into the *Church*, and no one take notice of them? could this be so, where was the watchful eye of providence over the *Church*? But if we could suppose this providence was unconcerned for preservation of the *Church*, could all the *Pastors* fall asleep at once? or could they all conspire together to deceive their Posterity? Moreover since God will always have a visible *Church*, what can you mention besides that which holds Communion with the *Church of Rome*, as the then present visible

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ible Church of *Christ*, when you began your re-formation (except perhaps some *Eastern Churches* which you dislike almost as much as that of *Rome*?) And if that *Church* could teach such errors as you charge her with, as matters of the *Christian faith*, what assurance can you have she hath not erred in defining the *Canon of Scriptures*, and delivering some *Book*, or *Books* for the word of *God*, which are not so? This is the sum of all the pleadings of the *Roman* party in their own behalf. And they are only such as the *Jewish Doctors* might have pleaded with as much plausibility against our *Lords Disciples*, and that first *Christian Church* which they planted in that *Nation*. For,

I. Where, may they say, will you produce the men of former Ages who taxed the *Jewish Church* with such errors and corruptions as your *Jesus* did? and bid men beware of the leaven of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, that is, the most holy and learned Members of our *Church*? Do not the *Christians* themselves acknowledg that we were once a *right vine*, and the beloved of the *Lord*? how, or when therefore did we cease to be so? If by *Schism*; produce that *major* part, or body of the *Jewish Church* from which we separated, when first your *Jesus*, like another *Luther*, appeared among us? Or if by *Heresie* we ceased to be so; by what *Church*, what *Councils* were we condemned? Who can believe that God would ever suffer such dangerous *Doctrines* to prevail in his own *Church*, and raise up no *Church Guides*, no *Prophets* to discover things so destructive to her very being, till these new *Teachers* and *Reformers* first arose? Where then had God a true *Church* in the world, if not among the people of the *Jews*? what other

Vid. *stillingsf.*
Sermon 24.
Acts xiv.

ther Church could Christ or his Apostles mention, besides that which he so often taxed with voiding the Commandments of God, and rendring his worship vain, because of some traditions which they had received from their Forefathers? If then God suffered this Church to be all overrun with such a fatal leprosie, and gave no clear discovery thereof, where was the watchful eye of Providence? Where was that God who promised that he would put his name for ever in Jerusalem, and that his eyes, and heart should be perpetually there? But suppose that Providence was unconcerned, did all our Pastors fall asleep at once? or could they all conspire to deceive posterity? Were not the Oracles of God committed to us Jews, did not you Christians receive them from us, if then our Church might teach her Children such destructive errors, as you charge her with, how can you be assured that she hath not erred even in that Canon of Scriptures which from her you have received?

Now though this instance, which I have largely prosecuted, may be sufficient to shew the vanity of the most plausible pretences of R. H. against the Protestants, both in his Rational account, and his Discourse. It might be farther manifested that they as strongly plead for the Heathen world, against the Jew, for the Mahometan against the Christian, for the Priests of Baal, against Elias and those seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, for the prevailing Arian, against the Orthodox, for the Fornicator, the Simoniack, the Covetous and the Debauched person in all those Ages in which these were the Epidemical, and almost general diseases of the Clergy, that is from the tenth, to the sixteenth Century, and lastly for

Antichrist

Vide. Appen.
Chap. 3. S. 10,
16.

Antichrist himself, when he, according to the predictions of the Scripture, and the confession of many *Roman Catholics*, shall drive the *Church*, that is the *Orthodox Professors* of the Faith into the *Wilderness*, and slay the *Witnesses* of *Christ*, and of his *Doctrine*. But,

To conclude, If this be truly the result of the most specious pretences of the *Roman party* to draw our souls into their deadly snares, if all their fairest pleas do make for *Judaism*, more naturally than they do for *Popery*. If what they urge to prove the *Potestant Divines* to be *Deceivers* of the people, doth more strongly prove our blessed *Jesus* a *Deceiver*, which is the highest *Blasphemy*. I hope that no true lover of this *Jesus* will be much tempted by such pleas to entertain a good opinion of the *Romish Faith*. It being certainly that Faith which cannot be established, but on the ruins of *Christianity*, nor embraced by any *Protestant*, but to the greatest hazard, if not the ruin of his soul.

F I N I S.
